

NEWS RELEASE

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The President and the Chief of Naval Operations have sent messages to the detainees who had to evacuate the U. S. Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The President's message, which has been relayed by radio to the four ships carrying the detainees, and the Chief of Naval Operations for relay to those already ashore and detained, reads:

"To you who have had to leave your homes at Guantanamo I send my deep regret. I know you do it with sadness, for some of you also leave behind your husbands, wives, your fathers -- and you who have been civilian employees are separated from your jobs as well as your homes. It is my most earnest hope that circumstances will permit your return. I send my warmest greetings and best wishes to you and advise you leave behind Signed John F. Kennedy."

The President's message was also relayed to the Little Creek, Virginia, Amphibious Base, and the Jacksonville, Florida, Naval Air Station for relay to the dependent-detainees.

The Chief of Naval Operations sent the following message:

"The calm and serene manner in which you have accepted the threat of possible personal danger while living at Guantanamo has been viewed with admiration and respect. Now our judgment dictates that you should leave the scene of an increasing danger to your own safety. I am sure you will accept this action with the same fine spirit that has been so obvious throughout your stay at Guantanamo. Rest assured that we will do all possible to provide for your welfare in the days ahead. GEORGE ANDERSON."

Rear Admiral Edward J. O'Donnell, Commander of the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, sent the following message to Admiral Anderson:

"I was able to read your kind and warm message over ship's loud-speakers to our people embarked in the DUKWAG BAY and WABAB. Was not quite agile enough to make the DESOTO COUNTRY. The whole evacuation went very well and amply bore out the kind things you said in your message Rear Admiral O'Donnell."

END